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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 004623

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STATE FOR NEA/PPD (CWHITTLESEY), NEA/ARP (DBERNS), NEA/PI
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MUSCAT FOR EST OFFICER

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SUBJECT: RESEARCH LINKS WITH THE U.S. - THE KUWAIT FUND FOR
THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

11. SUMMARY: On October 19, 2005, the Ambassador met with
the Director General of the Kuwait Foundation for the
Advancement of Science (KFAS). KFAS is a non-profit, non-
governmental research funding entity chaired by the Emir of
Kuwait, and supported by nearly 900 Kuwaiti companies that
annually donate one percent of their profits. The
discussion focused on KFAS's linkages with U.S.
institutions, including Harvard, MIT, Rice University, and
George Washington University, as well as funding of
projects in the Gulf region. The Mission hopes to revive a
pre-September 11, 2001, KFAS initiative to send the top
five percent of Kuwaiti high school graduates to the U.S.
for summer study and tourism that was postponed due to
perceived visa and travel complications. END SUMMARY.

Kuwaiti Business Funds Science Research

12. During a call on Dr. Ali A. Al-Shamlan, the Director
General of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of
Science (KFAS) the Ambassador, accompanied by the CAO and
EST Officer, learned that the organization was founded in
1976 by the future Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Jabir Al-Ahmad
Al-Sabah. Joined by 40 Kuwaiti firms that each donated
1,500 Kuwaiti Dinars as seed money, KFAS was established
with the U.S. National Science Foundation as a model,
primarily to serve as a non-profit, non-governmental
organization that funds research both in Kuwait and abroad.

Well-Funded by Local Firms

13. Approximately 900 companies listed in the Kuwait Stock
Exchange contribute one per cent of their profits to KFAS.
This funding mechanism is regulated by an "informal
agreement." Until 1998, the rate of funding was at the
level of five per cent. The contribution dropped to two
percent 1998 to 2002. Nominally, the KFAS Board is chaired
by the Amir, but with the decline of his active
participation in the Board, the KFAS Director General
described difficulties in charting the organization's
future.

Strong Links to U.S. Universities

14. KFAS has established ties with several prestigious
universities in the U.S. and in the U.K.:

Kuwait-MIT Center for Natural Resources and the Environment

a. On May 12, 2005, KFAS and Massachusetts Institute of Technology announced the creation of a research-and-education center devoted to progress on key environmental, hydrologic and energy resource goals. The foundation will fund the center at the level of \$11 million over 10 years. The Kuwait-MIT Center for Natural Resources and the Environment will be based at MIT. This organization, whose core staff is MIT faculty in the sciences, engineering and policy studies, will promote interdisciplinary work by those investigators, by MIT students, and by Kuwaiti researchers and students.

The Kuwait Chair at George Washington University

b. In July, 2005, KFAS funded a Chair at the George Washington University (GWU). GWU will receive more than \$3.3 million (1 million Kuwaiti Dinars) from KFAS to fund the Kuwait Chair for Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Affairs (also known as "The Kuwait Chair") at GWU's Elliott School of International Affairs. This endowment provides the Elliott School with a faculty member (currently Ambassador-retired Edward "Skip" Gnehm) to focus on the Gulf region and give students the resources and expertise needed to understand the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula accurately.

Harvard's Kuwait Program

c. KFAS created the Kuwait Program Research Fund at Harvard

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University's John F. Kennedy School of Government in January 2001. This program aims to build engagements, partnerships, and intellectual exchanges between Harvard University, Kuwait, and other states of the Gulf Cooperation Council. The fund complements and reinforces Kuwait's independent efforts and progress toward meeting global and regional public policy challenges. Consisting of an endowed professorship, specially designed Executive Programs, sponsored research focusing on public policy and security in Kuwait and throughout the Gulf, the program includes an annual academic meeting in May at Harvard.

Rice University's Arab Studies Chair

d. In 1995, KFAS contributed to the establishment of an endowed Chair in Arab Studies and supports the Baker Institute for Public Policy, both at Rice University.

George H. W. Bush Presidential Library

e. At Texas A&M, KFAS financially supported the George H. W. Bush Presidential Library.

Cambridge and Oxford

f. In the United Kingdom, KFAS funds Kuwait Foundation Lectures at the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford.

Center for Diabetes Research

15. In Kuwait, KFAS has constructed a new Center for Diabetes Research that has not yet begun operations due to an internal debate over which entity, KFAS or the Health Ministry, would manage the Diabetes Center. KFAS intends to run the facility and hire either the Miami University

Diabetes Center or the U.K. firm Interhealth to administer the center during its initial years of operation. KFAS also seeks cooperation with the Forsyth Institute of Boston on issues pertaining to diabetic oral health care.

Finding Water in the Desert

¶6. KFAS's main client is the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR). Among other research fields, KFAS funds research on the development of water resources. Regionally, KFAS supports the research conducted by the Middle East Desalination Resource Center in Oman.

Summer Student Program in the U.S.

¶7. Prior to 9/11, KFAS planned to send the top five percent of Kuwaiti high school graduates to the U.S. during the summer for study programs and tourism. The project stalled due to perceived visa and travel difficulties.

¶8. The Mission plans to continue discussions with KFAS with the intention of reviving the idea to send fresh Kuwaiti high school graduates to the U.S. for summer study and travel programs. Such a program would be an exceptional partnership furthering the Mission's public diplomacy goals through educational exchanges.

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